

# High Representative appoints Croat Members of the Federation Constitutional Commission

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, on Thursday appointed Mr Ilija Simic, the Speaker of BiH House of Peoples and President of the Croat Peasant Party (HSS), as well as Mr Ivan Plejic, member of the Croat National Community (HNZ) as the two Croat members of the Federation Constitutional Commission whose seats had been vacant.

The High Representative had offered the two vacant seats to the HDZ. Despite repeated appeals to the HDZ and a letter the High Representative sent the party on 23 March, the HDZ refused to nominate candidates for the Commission. The HDZ has thereby thrown away the historic opportunity to engage in the process of constitutional reform and to contribute to securing the rights of the Croat people in the future institutional framework of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The High Representative fears that the HDZ does not have the intention to live up to its responsibilities towards its voters, but has embarked on a course which, were it to be pursued, would lead the Croat people into isolation.

He wishes Mr. Simic and Mr. Plejic well in their new responsible positions. He is convinced that they will fully represent the interests of the Croat people in the process of constitutional reform in the Federation aimed at amending the Federation Constitution in accordance with the ruling of the Constitutional Court on the constituent status of all three BiH peoples in both Entities.

The High Representative takes note of the work of both Entity

Constitutional Commissions. He expects the proposals that the Commissions have to draft, to be finalised over the next few weeks and then be passed on to the Entity Parliaments for approval.

The constitutional reform process in the two Entities is of utmost importance to the development of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a democratic state in which the rights of all its constituent peoples and citizens are protected in both Entities.